

**GROUSE CREEK, LESTER CREEK, MENNECKE CREEK,
RATTLESNAKE CREEK, RIMROCK GRAZING, SMITH PRAIRIE,
SPRING CREEK AND WILLIAMS CREEK C&H ALLOTMENT
2010 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS**

Boise National Forest
Mountain Home Ranger District

INTRODUCTION

The following information is direction on how livestock management is to be conducted on the Grouse Creek, Lester Creek, Mennecke Creek, Rattlesnake Creek, Rimrock Grazing, Smith Prairie, Spring Creek and Williams Creek Cattle & Horse (C&H) Allotments for the 2010 grazing season. The Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) are part of your Term grazing Permit consistent with Part 1, Item 3 and Part 2, Item 8(a), and you are responsible for compliance with this direction.

Situations may develop during the grazing season that could require changes to these instructions. If this becomes necessary, or if you cannot comply with some part of these instructions, contact Tina Ruffing or Cindy Lancaster, district range staff, and obtain approval before initiating or deviating from your AOI. Failure to obtain prior approval could result in permit action.

The following table displays the permitted numbers and seasons of use for your allotments:

Allotment	Permitted Number and Class	Permitted Season of Use
Grouse Creek	185 cow/calf	06/01-10/30
pvt land permit	35 cow/calf	06/01-10/31
Lester Creek	164 cow/calf	07/01 - 10/31
Mennecke	287 cow/calf	06/01 - 09/30
River Unit	100 cow/calf	05/01 - 05/24
Rattlesnake	282 cow/calf	05/01 - 10/31
Rimrock - on	15 cow/calf	04/01 - 10/31
off numbers	325 cow/calf	04/01-10/31
Smith Prairie	55 cow/calf	05/01 - 10/15
Spring Creek	70 cow/calf	05/01 - 06/30
Williams Creek - on	4 cow/calf	07/01 – 10/31
off numbers	696 cow/calf	07/01-10/31

For the 2010 grazing season, you are authorized to graze your allotments as follows:

Allotment	Authorized Number and Class	Authorized Season of Use
Grouse Creek	185 cow/calf	06/01-10/30
pvt land permit	35 cow/calf	06/01-10/31
Lester Creek	164 cow/calf	07/01 - 10/31
Mennecke	287 cow/calf	06/01- 09/30
River Unit	100 cow/calf	04/30 - 05/27
Rattlesnake	282 cow/calf	05/01 - 10/31
Flat Iron	35 cow/calf	04/15 - 05/01
Rimrock - on	15 cow/calf	04/15 - 10/31
off numbers	325 cow/calf	04/15 - 10/31
Smith Prairie	55 cow/calf	05/01 - 10/15
Spring Creek	70 cow/calf	05/01 - 06/30
Williams Creek - on	4 cow/calf	07/01 - 10/31
off numbers	696 cow/calf	07/01 - 10/31

Some flexibility will be allowed for weather conditions, range readiness and livestock needs. The period of use is also subject to compliance with Forest Plan standards and guidelines and Implementation Monitoring requirements as discussed below. Please review carefully the standards and guides listed.

BILLING INFORMATION

The grazing fee for the 2010 grazing season is \$1.35 per head month for cattle. You will be billed based on the authorized use listed above. Confirmation of payment through the National Finance Center is required and must be received before livestock can enter National Forest System lands. In order to meet this requirement, please ensure that bills for collection are paid by the due date indicated.

If permitted livestock are required to leave an allotment early because utilization standards have been reached, drought conditions persist or other reasons as determined by the Forest Officer, a credit/refund may be requested. This request must be submitted in writing to the District Ranger by December 1, 2010.

LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

Direction for how livestock will be run is outlined below for each allotment.

Grouse Creek Allotment

A deferred system of grazing will be continued on the Grouse Creek allotment this grazing season. Livestock will enter the Cow Creek Unit first this season where they will remain until approximately July 7 or until utilization standards are reached. Livestock will then be moved to the South Fork Unit where they will remain until approximately August 15 or until utilization standards are met. Livestock will enter the Grouse Creek Unit around August 16 where they will remain until approximately September 23 or until utilization levels are met. Livestock will enter the Wood Creek Unit last where they will remain until the end of the permitted season or until utilization standards are reached, whichever occurs first.

Lester Creek Allotment

Cattle will trail down Forest Road (FSR) 128 to the allotment where they will enter the Lester Creek area. Cattle will be held in this area by regular riding for six to eight weeks, or until utilization levels are reached. Cattle will then be moved to the White Flat area where they will remain until utilization levels are met or until the end of the permitted season. Any cattle that drift into the wrong area will be promptly herded back over the ridge into the proper area. Livestock will exit the allotment by trailing back over FSR 128 to private property.

Mennecke Allotment

This allotment will be grazed in the following rotation: River Unit, Bock Creek Unit, Cayuse/Mennecke Unit and Rock Creek Unit. One hundred head of cow/calf pairs will remain in the River Unit until May 27, when they will be moved to the Bock Creek Unit. The remainder of the authorized cattle will enter this unit on June 1 and will remain for four to six weeks, depending on forage availability. Cattle will then be moved to the Cayuse/Mennecke Unit, where they will remain for four to six weeks. Cattle will be moved to the Rock Creek Unit last.

Rattlesnake Allotment

Thirty-five head of livestock will enter the Flat Iron area of the South Fork Unit no earlier than April 15. The rest of the livestock will enter the South Fork and Trail Creek Units no earlier than May 1. Once utilization levels are met in these units, typically six to eight weeks after livestock enter the units, cattle will be moved to the Rattlesnake Unit. Livestock will remain in the Rattlesnake Unit until utilization levels are reached, or August 15, whichever comes first, as directed in the Biological Opinion addressing this allotment (File #110.0500/1-4-99-F-17). Livestock will then be moved to the Elk Creek Unit where they will remain until mid-to late-September, depending on forage conditions. Once utilization levels have been reached in the Elk Creek Unit, livestock will be moved to the Long Gulch Unit. The Slide Gulch Unit will be rested this season. As in previous years, calves will be weaned this fall at the corrals in Jackass Flat as cattle are moved into the Long Gulch unit.

When cattle are moved through the Rattlesnake Unit after August 15 to access other portions of the allotment, they should be moved in small groups down the road and kept out of the Rattlesnake Creek riparian area.

Smith Prairie Allotment

Livestock may enter the Lower Bench Unit no sooner than May 1. Cattle will remain in this unit for four to six weeks, or until utilization levels are met. Livestock will then be moved to the Gooseneck Unit where they will remain for four to six weeks. After proper use is achieved in the Gooseneck Unit, livestock will be moved to the Strawberry Creek Unit where they will remain until approximately mid-September. The Smith Creek Unit will be used last. The Lava Creek Unit will be rested this year.

Spring Creek Allotment

Livestock will enter the Pony Flat Unit, where they will remain for approximately three to five weeks or until use standards are met. Livestock will then be moved to the River Unit where they will remain for approximately three to five weeks. The Pony Creek Unit will be

grazed last. Livestock should be moved from each unit, and then off the forest, when proper use levels are reached.

Williams Creek and Rimrock Grazing Allotments

These are on-off allotments that are composed mostly of private land and have very little National Forest System lands within their boundaries. Please ensure that utilization standards on the National Forest portions of these allotments are not exceeded.

STANDARDS AND GUIDES

Close monitoring of utilization levels and diligent removal of livestock when they are reached is critical to ensure compliance with end-of-season utilization standards. Failure to meet these standards may result in the modification of grazing management, including reductions in Head Months or permitted area.

The following standards and guidelines apply to your allotments:

- Maximum forage utilization of representative areas within each pasture shall not exceed the values shown below at the end of the growing season. Variation in utilization standards in order to achieve specific vegetative management objectives shall occur with a site-specific or project-level decision according to direction in FSM 1922.5.
 - Riparian Areas: Maximum 45 percent use or retain a minimum 4-inch stubble height of hydric greenline species, whichever occurs first.
 - Upland Vegetative Cover Types: Early season or season long pastures – 40 percent use. Vegetative slow growth, after seed ripe conditions or late season pastures – 50 percent use. (RAST01, p. III-45)
- Livestock salting is prohibited in Riparian Conservation Areas (RCAs). Place salt no closer than ¼ mile from water and not within 100 feet of roads. Move salt from areas where utilization standards have been met. (RAST04, p. III-45)
- All livestock water developments must provide access and escape to and from water for all types of wildlife. (RAST09, p. III-45)
- Bulls must test negative for Trichomoniasis before entering National Forest System lands.
- Only certified weed-free hay and mulch are allowed on National Forest System lands.

Because they are early season units, upland utilization levels in the River Unit of the Mennecke allotment, the South Fork and Trail Creek units of the Rattlesnake allotment, the Lower Bench and Gooseneck Units of the Smith Prairie and the Pony Flat Unit of the Spring Creek allotment are 40%.

Due to the degraded condition caused by a blowout in 1996, Long Gulch has a 30 percent riparian utilization standard. A 5-inch stubble height along the greenline in riparian areas, or 25 percent use on current year's growth of the young willows in Long Gulch is acceptable. The 5-inch stubble height standard is preferred for determining when it is time to move the livestock to the next pasture.

IMPROVEMENTS

Your Term Grazing Permit contains a complete list of range improvements associated with your Allotments. Please note that all range improvements must be maintained to a proper functioning condition before livestock are placed on each allotment. Failure to do so is a violation of your term grazing permit and is subject to permit action. Non-functioning range improvements need to be brought to standard, or arrangements made with district range personnel to have them removed. Abandonment of improvements is not acceptable – if developments are not functioning and are no longer needed, they must be removed. In the event improvements cannot be practically maintained to standard, you should notify this office so we can identify them for reconstruction as funds become available.

Cattleguards are no longer considered part of your annual maintenance. It is still your responsibility to inspect cattleguards annually and inform the Forest Service of known problems or maintenance needs on them within your allotment boundaries. This includes, but is not limited to, wing or grate repair or replacement, brush removal, and cleaning.

As discussed at the spring meeting, the fence around the Cow Creek #3 (#2003) water troughs needs to be repaired prior to livestock entering the Cow Creek Unit this year. Supplies are available for fence maintenance at the Mountain Home Ranger District. It was also noted that many of the water developments on the Grouse Creek Allotment did not have wildlife escape ramps. Even though most of the water developments are tires, they still need to have escape ramps attached to the sides of the tires. Contact Tina if you need more ramps.

The permittee on the Willow Creek Allotment would like to meet this spring as discuss trading maintenance of boundary fences between the Willow and Grouse Creek allotments and the National Forest-BLM-private boundary on the west side of the Willow Creek and Grouse Creek allotments. You indicated at the spring meeting that you would be willing to meet and discuss maintenance of these fences.

It was agreed at the spring meeting that you and the permittee on the Lake Creek Allotment would install a cattleguard in National Forest System Jeep Trail 641 on the division fence between the Lake Creek and Lester Creek allotments. Construction is planned for mid- to late June, prior to livestock entering either allotment. The Forest Service will supply the cattleguard and materials needed to complete the project. Permittees will be responsible for transporting the cattleguard from Lester Creek Guard Station and for installing it. Since this cattleguard is not located in a road designated for public travel, this cattleguard will become a permittee maintenance item. Please coordinate with Tina prior to beginning work.

Last fall, District personnel noted that the Goat Creek Trough #1332 on the Lester Creek Allotment was in disrepair and was not functioning. Photos indicate that there is enough water available at the site to supply at least one water trough. It was agreed at the spring meeting that this trough would be brought to functioning condition. This AOI authorizes you to take equipment to the trough location along a route scouted and agreed upon by you and Tina.

Your 2009 AOI indicated that the Williams Creek Boundary Fence (#1104) on the Williams Creek Allotment would be removed by the end of October, 2009. Although some work was completed last year, the majority of the non-functioning fence is still in place. As was discussed and agreed at the spring meeting this year, the remainder of the Williams Creek Boundary Fence (#1104) will be completely removed by the end of October, 2010. The northern portion of this fence near NFS Road #128 (Meadow Creek Road) will be retained and brought to functioning to help control livestock drift along Forest Road 128.

RIDER OR PERMITTEE INSTRUCTIONS

Off dates for these allotments are considered approximate and will depend on utilization levels. To prevent over-utilization, a concerted effort should be made to distribute cattle over the entire allotment and to effectively graze all suitable areas in that unit. Permitted numbers are based on the premise that active management will occur to effect adequate livestock distribution. Cattle need to be moved before meeting riparian and upland grazing standards. If cattle are allowed to concentrate in riparian areas and at water developments without being distributed to unused areas of the allotment, the grazing capacity of the allotment is diminished to those areas only.

Permittee monitoring of utilization levels is not mandatory, but is highly advised since permittees will be held accountable for any failures to meet end-of-season compliance monitoring.

REQUIRED REPORTING

Enclosed are several copies of a Year-end Grazing Report for you to record actual use data and range improvement maintenance for the 2010 grazing season for your allotments. You need to record the date and number of cattle turned onto each allotment, the number and date cattle are removed from each unit, and estimate the time and cost of management actions, including livestock herding and improvement maintenance, associated with each allotment. Accurate records of these dates, maintenance work, and range improvement needs should be kept and returned to our office at the end of the grazing season. The Forest Service uses these records to help allocate Range Betterment Funds. These funds are used to purchase materials for improvements. **This report should be returned to the Forest Service's Mountain Home Ranger District office no later than December 1.**

INSPECTIONS AND MONITORING

Range personnel may require you to delay your entry date on any of your allotments based on range readiness inspections that they have completed. You will be notified as soon as possible if your turn-on date is delayed.

Range personnel may conduct utilization monitoring and improvement inspections periodically on your allotments.

COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

The Idaho Fish and Game is responsible for wolf management in our area. Michael Lucid is the Regional Biologist in charge of wolf management and can be reached at

(208) 465-8465, ext. 315. Wildlife Services should be contacted first as soon as you suspect a wolf depredation has occurred. The Fish and Wildlife Services contact for this area is Jered Hedelius and he can be reached at (208) 681-8756 or (208) 934-4354 (Central District Office). Please contact Jered if you encounter predator problems on your allotment this summer.

OTHER

Any carcass or animal remains will be moved at least 100 yards from live water, trails or roads. Animal carcasses in highly visible areas need to be relocated to more remote areas.

The Forest Service's Motor Vehicle Use Rule is in place on the Mountain Home Ranger District. Public motorized, wheeled vehicle use is prohibited on all NFS lands except on routes that are designated on the current year's Motorized Vehicle Use Map. This AOI authorizes you and your employees to use wheeled motor vehicles off of designated routes for administrative use within your allotments for livestock management purposes. This administrative use includes salting and herding of livestock, maintenance of range improvements, and forage utilization inspections. Use of heavy equipment, such as bulldozers or backhoes is **not** included in this authorization. Use of heavy equipment will need to be requested through and approved by the District Ranger on a case-by-case basis.

As requested at the spring meeting, please find attached a copy of the Grouse Creek Allotment map showing structural range improvements. Additional maps for other allotments can be provided upon request. Also enclosed are several copies of the 2010 Motor Vehicle Use Map. Please dispose of other copies of this map that you may have as they are no longer valid.

<i>/s/ L. G. Davison and Sons, Inc. W. G. Davison, Vice President</i>	<i>4/20/2010</i>
Permittee	Date

<i>/s/ Stephaney Church</i>	<i>4/21/2010</i>
District Ranger	Date